breath was a ragged gasp of unwanted pleasure. She pressed forward then, taking his mouth in a bruising kiss, pulling back when he returned it.

"You see--I can --give--pleasure--or pain!" And her fingers fastened on his nipples, pinching them erect, twisting the tender flesh until he twisted in his chains.

"So sensitive, poor Arain--and no master to comfort you."

Her kisses followed the chains now, across the broad chest, down the ticklish ribs to the softness at the side of his waist. As she slid back McCoy could see Arain's rigid cock bent down by her body, following the cleft in her ass, could see her stiffen as it probed her slit, see her bite her lip as she let it slide forward and free.

Arain was fighting himself and her now, his eyes closed, perspiration highlighting the play of muscles under the skin as he tried not to respond, but his lips were swollen from her kiss and the flush of desire burned bright in his throat and face.

She slid back, brushed the glowing head of his cock with her lips and sighed in pleasure.

"I can taste myself on you, alien. What is your taste?"

McCoy heard a gasp almost in his ear, felt the heat of Spock's body against his own. The Vulcan sat up, panting, and started to rise, all his attention fixed on the stage.

McCoy didn't want to die. Spock was off balance, his reflexes slowed, and McCoy's hand knew just where to apply the oldest restraint. No one, human or Vulcan, was going to risk having his testicles torn off. Halfway into a deathblow, Spock realized what McCoy's final spasm could to him and reached for the neckpinch instead.

As the steely fingers settled on his shoulder McCoy sent up a mental shout, hoping the dual contact could somehow initiate the mind link.

Not yet, Spock!

It was like plunging into a furnace, extinction almost before the shock of agony, but although he must have blacked out, something got through, because he came to with Spock's hands on his shoulders, supporting him and Spock's voice, striving for sanity, sounding in his mind.

You are--correct, Doctor. You can remove your hand.

McCoy relaxed his grip and his indrawn breath, feeling for the first time the double round warm weight against his palm, the crisp, dry fleece crushed against Spock's thigh, the velvet kiss of Spock's cock just brushing his wrist as he withdrew.

What are you going to do? shot McCoy, and the unvoiced, get us all killed? was as clear as the rest of the question.

I am not yet certain. I do not wish to die, but I have burned--burned-- The fever in Spock's body flamed through McCoy, settled in his groin, bringing him erect.

Don't, he protested, knowing in the same second that it was beyond Spock's control. Don't watch them, he amended, tell me what happened to Jim.

He knew my desire for Taaz Avine--demanded to give it--I thought, hoped it would cool our flame that would not cease burning, his mind, his body so cool--the warriors came--Jim--

Spock broke the link, the image of the she-hawk driving herself down on Arain filling his mind.

Arain was fighting his bonds now with berserker strength and Spock was fighting for control, every muscle in his body rigid as they watched the slave crush his body against the chains, trying to reach the woman. Her hair was loose now, scourging the air, feathered tendrils lashing in rhythm, her heat, her cries flogging Arain into a frenzy, desperate for release.

But again it was the aggressor who stiffened, swept her feathered arms high into the air, then collapsed, broken-winged across Arain's racked body. In that moment Spock's hand came down on McCoy's neck and the physician knew that his spine would snap if the Vulcan's control did.

Weakly, slowly, the fallen hawk stirred and the wings lifted. She reached for help, and the attendants came, lifting her up, off the still rigid organ that speared up from Arain's groin. Spock's grip relaxed.

As other attendants offered their services in the audience, those on the stage began to unbind Arain. His right wrist was freed first, and he threw his forearm over his eyes as they unwound the heavy links. Cruel prints marked the fair skin in the tenderness of belly and side, showed red as a brand on the inside of his thigh. They washed him impersonally as they could, but every touch sent a new tremor through him.

The interval was longer this time, but not long enough for McCoy, trying to reason a way out of this. If this state had been caused somehow by Spock, then Spock should be able to cure it somehow, but Spock could not be seen with the human, could not initiate the mind-meld here. The House of Barak would hardly tolerate telepathic tampering with their prize. But it must be now, Vulcan and human alike were straining the absolute limits of endurance. As the slave lay there with his arm over his eyes he had unconsciously assumed a pose McCoy had seen Kirk take a hundred times over when the decisions and the prices were more than any one human should have to face. And how, even supposing they lived and he could be restored, could Kirk face this?

It was too late for thought. Spock was rising to bid.

He offered an emerald, green as blood. It burned through the air like a falling star into Tarsa's hands and silenced the competition.

"You would pay this, my lord?"

"Wager," said Spock, "not pay." His voice was so hoarse it was almost unrecognizable. "I, too, have a human slave taken in battle."

Oh, no, thought McCoy, this won't work.

But Spock's strained voice, Spock's hand trembling on his shoulder, silenced him.

"Among humans, some few have the tradition of bonding."

Vulcan liar.

"They love each other's honor and some--would share--even torture--to be together."

Or maybe not.

"I believe this slave is such a man."